

## Parham Annual Local History Recorder's Report, 2021

The year opened with a public meeting in the village hall to understand the pros and cons of the **solar farm** proposed by Low Carbon and AECOM to generate a peak of 50MW of electricity. It would cover six fields (74 hectares) within and to the north of Parham airfield with solar panels during its planned 40-year life, but the developers say that sheep could be grazed and wild flora and fauna encouraged beneath the panels. Attendance was disappointing, but consultations continued and eventually, in early October, East Suffolk Council's strategic planning committee approved the plans, with just one vote against. During the public consultations, about two-thirds of comments were favourable, while one third included some negative comments or concerns. Of the surrounding parish councils, Glemham and Marlesford put in objections, but Parham was supportive. The combined parish councils secured £200 per year per mega-watt of capacity from the developers to fund local environmental projects (if construction goes ahead). Construction has not started, but disruption is expected to be limited to a 16-week period. One of the main concerns is a new mile-long underground cable necessary in order to connect the site to the substation in Hacheston.

The Orwell Housing Association **infill development** on the main road through Parham ground on slowly through the year. The site slopes down to the River Ore and the developers discovered that its drainage would be challenging (already well-known by locals). The construction involved pile driving (see picture), and discovery of a surprise drain caused considerable reworking of the plans. Orwell Housing had originally intended to build 5 homes to sell on the open market as well as 10 affordable homes. But, towards the end of 2021, they decided to solely build affordable homes and squeeze 19 into the site, due to the likely difficulty finding buyers for dwellings on a flood plain.



[www.orwell-housing.co.uk](http://www.orwell-housing.co.uk)

On the morning of 9th April, before many in Parham even knew he had died, Bell Tower Captain Jos Slade **tolled the bell** at St. Mary's to mark the death of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

On 8 April, the perfect body of a barn owl was found in a straw barn at Oak Farm – remote near the northern tip of the parish. Our local ornithologist found it had been ringed two parishes away in Badingham on 19 Jun 2012, making it the **oldest barn owl** he had ever come across. Having died of healthy old age, this is evidence that the conditions for birds of prey in the area are continuing to improve. Indeed, a couple of years earlier, this owl was probably one of the pair that successfully reared five owlets in the same barn, which was the record for Suffolk that year.



[www.parhamairfieldmuseum.co.uk](http://www.parhamairfieldmuseum.co.uk)

**Parham airfield museum re-opened** on 27 Jun 2021. This following completion of the work to fit out the displays in the new Kindred building, which had continued during the pandemic And on 1 Aug the museum held a display of **vintage WWII military vehicles**.



[www.parhamairfieldmuseum.co.uk](http://www.parhamairfieldmuseum.co.uk)

In June, the new **Katch a bus service** was also launched. It's on-demand but on a fixed route through the village between Framlingham, Wickham and Wickham rail station.

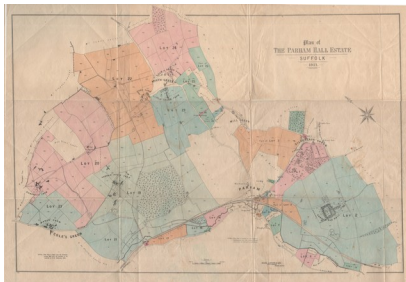
Because of the COVID pandemic, there were no fund-raising events in the **Village Hall** for eighteen months, an unprecedented interruption which finally ended with a Coffee Morning held on 30th October. Attendance was good, despite the bad weather, and one could feel the sense of relief at being able to meet again. Other activities also resumed in the Village Hall, including Framlingham Spinners and Weavers, Powerhoop exercise classes, Table Tennis, and The Cow Shed Theatre Company (actually, the last relaunched in early 2022).

The **Biogen Composting Plant at Silverlace Green closed** in November, to the relief of nearby residents, who found the smell overwhelming at times in summer. The site has undergone a deep clean and will be sold.

The Parish Council agreed to participate in The **Queen's Green Canopy project** to commemorate The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and will be planting a pear tree with a commemorative bench on the Church meadow and on each of the three greens as well as distributing fruit trees to parish residents. By the end of the year, Mike Gray had delivered trees to thirty households. Emphasis was placed on pear trees because the name Parham means **pear-tree farmstead**.

As the year closed, what might become the **Parham local history group** held its first meeting. It is currently a small group working on various projects of interest, but the intention is to go public and invite in others once it has decided on the form and direction that it would like to take.

### Looking back from 2021 to Parham Past



In July 1921, the Corrance estate sold much of the land and housing in the village by auction. This ended the somewhat feudal structure of much of the village's ownership, with most of the lots being picked up by the tenant farmers of the time. The sale included two of Parham's three halls, seven farmhouses with their surrounding farmyards and farmland, as well as numerous cottages and smallholdings. To mark this **centenary**,

a scan of the [auction catalogue](#) and [auction map](#) were published online for villagers to dig into the detailed estate-agent-style descriptions of their homes as they had been one hundred years earlier.

Throughout the year, villagers continued to contribute old postcards and photos of the village to the virtual village museum on Facebook. The undated postcard selected here shows the southern end of Mill Green with a rather hazy image of the mill still standing in the background (demolished 1944).



2021 marked the end of an era for the Parham branch of the Friend family. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the family was the most populous in the village, with 37 Friends recorded at their peak in 1851, mostly on North Green. At the end of 2021, Joan and Norah Friend moved out of Cloverdale on North Green into Mills Meadows care home in Framlingham. They had lived on the Green all their lives with their late sister and brother, all unmarried, and their late mother. Before retirement, the sisters all worked on the farm across the Green; as housekeeper, accounts clerk and farm hand.

*John Adams & Bob Briscoe*

*Local History Recorders for the parish of Parham*